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Attention Assignment Editor: Opportunity For Story Localization

LA GEAR UP Making College Dreams A Reality

BATON ROUGE - Thanks to LA GEAR UP (Louisiana's implementation of the federal Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs), students at participating low-income, low-performing middle schools across the state are one step closer to making their college dreams come true. The Louisiana Systemic Initiatives Council, the governing body that oversees administration of Louisiana's federal GEAR UP grant, recently approved "Rewards For Success" scholarship awards totaling \$107,500 for 255 students attending designated LA GEAR UP schools. Individual students will receive awards of \$1,000, \$500, or \$250 each.

Rewards For Success, the scholarship component of the LA GEAR UP program, is designed to encourage and reward student behaviors that have been shown to indicate the potential for college success. Academic achievement, school and community involvement, regular school attendance, and parental involvement were the success indicators the student scores were based on. Winners were chosen from the top applicants at each of the 22 schools participating. The award recipients will be the beneficiaries of accounts to be established on their behalf in Louisiana's 529 college savings program, the Student Tuition Assistance and Revenue Trust (START) Savings Program. The accounts will earn interest as well as special earnings enhancements funded by the state of Louisiana that are based on their parents' income.

"The 'Rewards for Success' scholarships are a great feature of the overall LA GEAR UP program," said Commissioner of Higher Education Joseph Savoie. "These accounts will not only come in

handy when the recipients are ready to enroll in college; they also serve as an inspiration and reminder of the opportunities that can lie ahead for students as they work through LA GEAR UP to prepare

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LA GEAR UP Rewards for Success

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themselves for college.”

Co-director of the grant, State Superintendent Cecil Picard agreed: “The hope of the Rewards For Success program is that these awards will provide the extra motivation needed for these talented youngsters and their families to achieve higher levels of education.”

“Rewards For Success opens a door of possibility for many underserved students who might not otherwise aspire to obtain a college degree,” said Mrs. Frances Henry, Chair of the Louisiana Systemic Initiatives Council and a member of the Board of Regents.

The purpose of the LA GEAR UP Program is to increase the number of students who graduate from high school and go on to enroll and succeed in college. The five-year, \$12.5 million U. S. Department of Education grant supports reform initiatives at 25 low-performing middle schools in 11 districts throughout the state. In addition to scholarships, the program also provides other enhancements for students, like summer camps, and school-based initiatives such as professional development for teachers.

The scholarships are being presented formally at awards ceremonies held at participating schools. A partial statewide schedule of remaining presentations follows:

Transylvania Elementary School	October 6, 2003 - 9:10 a.m.
Lake Providence Junior High School	October 6, 2003 - 2:30 p.m.
Ward III School	October 7, 2003 - 9:00 a.m.
Winnsboro Junior High School	October 7, 2003 - 10:30 a.m.
Ft. Necessity Junior High School	October 7, 2003 - 1:00 p.m.
Garyville/Mt. Airy Math and Science Magnet School	October 21, 2003 - 6:00 p.m.
Zwolle Intermediate School	October 28, 2003 - 6:00 p.m.

Presentations will also be scheduled at the following schools: Bunkie Middle School, Clinton Middle School, Jackson Middle School, Livonia High School, Many Jr. High, Marksville Middle School, Pointe Coupee Central High, Reuben McCall Jr. High, and Tallulah Jr. High.

More information about LA GEAR UP can be obtained at www.lagearup.org or contact LA GEAR UP Director Dr. Kerry Davidson at (225) 219-0690.

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